compounds the challenge. Based on independent monitoring undertaken by reputed institutions on some of the major rivers under NRCP, the water quality in terms of BOD (Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand) values has improved at most locations as compared to water quality before taking up of pollution abatement schemes.

Conservation of rivers is an ongoing and collective effort of the Central and State Governments. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments in river conservation through the central plans. River conservation activities such as creation of civic infrastructure for sewage management and disposal are also being implemented under other central schemes, such as Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns, as well as under State schemes.

The Government has initiated an exercise for revamping the river conservation strategy to promote a holistic and integrated river basin approach. The Central Government has set up the 'National Ganga River Basin Authority' (NGRBA) on 20.2.2009 as an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority to ensure effective abatement of pollution and conservation of the river Ganga by adopting a holistic approach with the river basin as the unit of planning.

Conservation of ponds in Madhya Pradesh

†1878. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal, worth Rs. 256 crore for development and conservation of 10 ponds, has been received from Government of Madhya Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard, so far and by when the proposed sanctioned amount will be released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A proposal entitled 'Conservation and Management of Lakes in Bhopal' at total cost of Rs.256 crores was received from the Government of Madhya Pradesh for financial assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The proposal has been included in the reprioritized list of projects of Ministry of Environment and Forests for JICA assistance and forwarded to the Ministry of Finance for posing to Government of Japan under ODA Loan Package during FY 2009.

Forest cover

†1879. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that for pollution free environment 33 per cent forest cover out of total geographic area is essential;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, Government's assessment about the norms for the required forest cover;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there are many States with lesser forest cover than the required norms;

(d) if so, the details of such States indicating their forest cover; and

(e) the target oriented plans for extension of forest cover?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) As per the National Forest Policy, 1988 the national goal is to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area of the country under forest of tree cover. In the hills and in mountainous regions, the aim is to maintain two-third of the area under such cover in order to prevent erosion and land degradation and to ensure the stability of the fragile eco-system.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The details are given in the statement (*See* below).

(e) Various schemes have been initiated for expansion of forest cover under the Centre and State Governments including Central Plan Schemes like National Afforestation Programme, Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats Intensification of forest management scheme, etc.

Statement

Forest and Tree cover in States/UTs as per India State of Forest Report, 2009

(area in km^2)

State/UT	Geographical Area	Forest Cover				% of GA
		Very Dense Forest	Mod. Dense Forest	Open Forest	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Andhra Pradesh	275,069	820	24,757	19,525	45,102	16.40
Arunachal Pradesh	83,743	20,858	31,556	14,939	67,353	80.43
Assam	78,438	1,461	11,558	14,673	27,692	35.30
Bihar	94,163	231	3,248	3,325	6,804	7.23
Chhattisgarh	135,191	4,162	35,038	16,670	55,870	41.33
Delhi	1,483	7	50	120	177	11.94
Goa	3,702	511	624	1,016	2,151	58.10
Gujarat	196,022	376	5,249	8,995	14,620	7.46
Haryana	44,212	27	463	1,104	1,594	3.61

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Himachal Pradesh	55,673	3,224	6,383	5,061	14,668	26.35
Jammu and Kashmir	222,236	4,298	8,977	9,411	22,686	10.21
Jharkhand	79,714	2,590	9,899	10,405	22,894	28.72
Karnataka	191,791	1,777	20,181	14,232	36,190	18.87
Kerala	38,863	1,443	9,410	6,471	17,324	44.58
Madhya Pradesh	308,245	6,647	35,007	36,046	77,700	25.21
Maharashtra	307,713	8,739	20,834	21,077	50,650	16.46
Manipur	22,327	701	5,474	11,105	17,280	77.40
Meghalaya	22,429	410	9,501	7,410	17,321	77.23
Mizoram	21,081	134	6,251	12,855	19,240	91.27
Nagaland	16,579	1,274	4,897	7,293	13,464	81.21
Orissa	155,707	7,073	21,394	20,388	48,855	31.38
Punjab	50,362	0	733	931	1,664	3.30
Rajasthan	342,239	72	4,450	11,514	16,036	4.69
Sikkim	7,096	500	2,161	696	3,357	47.31
Tamil Nadu	130,058	2,926	10,216	10,196	23,338	17.94
Tripura	10,486	111	4,770	3,192	8,073	76.99
Uttar Pradesh	240,928	1,626	4,563	8,152	14,341	5.95
Uttarakhand	53,483	4,762	14,165	5,568	24,495	45.80
West Bengal	88,752	2,987	4,644	5,363	12,994	14.64
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	8,249	3,762	2,405	495	6,662	80.76
Chandigarh	114	1	10	6	17	14.91
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	491	0	114	97	211	42.97
Daman and Diu	112	0	1	5	6	5.04
Lakshadweep	32	0	16	10	26	82.75
Puducherry	480	0	13	31	44	9.14
GRAND TOTAL	3,287,263	83,510	319,012	288,377	690,899	21.02